

inner cover, and an outer cover. The respective layers are optimized in variables such as hardness and thickness, and the golf ball overall weight and moment of inertia are also optimized.

For claims to be rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), each and every element, as set forth in the claims, must be found, either expressively or inherently described in a single prior art reference. Independent claims 1 and 18, as amended, now recite an outer cover layer hardness of greater than about 56 Shore D. Hayashi does not disclose or suggest an outer cover layer hardness of greater than about 56 Shore D.

Accordingly, the independent claims 1 and 18 herein are believed to be allowable by virtue of the amended claim elements, and the remaining claims 2-16 and 19-28 are believed to be allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from these independent claims. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

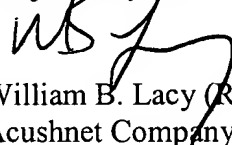
Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hayashi. Because claim 17 is cancelled, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is believed to have been overcome. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

CONCLUSION

Based on the remarks set forth above, Applicants believe that the rejections have been overcome and that the claims of the subject application are now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any further concerns or believe that a discussion with the Applicants' agent would further the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the agent at the number below.

No fee is believed to be due for this submission. Should any fees be required, however, please charge the required fees to the Credit Card Payment Form submitted herewith.

Respectfully submitted,



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MARKED-UP VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A golf ball comprising a core and a cover disposed about the core, wherein the core comprises a center and at least one outer core layer adjacent the center, and the cover comprises at least one inner cover layer and an outer cover layer;

(a) wherein the center has an outer diameter from about 0.375 in to about 1.4 in and deflection of greater than about 4.5 mm under a load of 100 Kg;

(b) the outer core layer has an outer diameter of from about 1.4 in to about 1.62 in;

(c) the inner cover layer has an outer diameter of greater than about 1.58 in and a material hardness of less than about 72 Shore D; and

(d) the outer cover layer has a hardness of greater than about [50] 56 Shore D.

~~17. Cancelled.~~

18. (Amended) A golf ball comprising a core and a cover disposed about the core, wherein the core comprises a solid center and an outer core layer adjacent the center, and the cover comprises an inner cover layer and an outer cover layer;

(a) wherein the center has an outer diameter from about 0.375 in to about 1.4 in and deflection of greater than about 4.5 mm under a load of 100 Kg;

(b) the outer core layer has an outer diameter of from about 1.4 in to about 1.62 in;

(c) the inner cover layer has an outer diameter of greater than about 1.58 in and a material hardness of less than about 72 Shore D; and

(d) the outer cover layer has a hardness of greater than about [50] 56 Shore D.